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As to the condition of human remains in the Mt Royal mound, we are told, "In no mound of the St Johns have human remains been found so fragmentary through the ravages of decay, and it is probable that traces of many burials have entirely disappeared. In certain cases human remains were represented by hardened sand retaining nothing but the shape. Many fragments of bones resembled moistened powder and crumbled at the touch. Beyond a few crowns of teeth no remains were saved. It is probable that an admixture of shell with the sand of the mound would have preserved the bones to a material extent." (Page 20.)

CLARENCE B. MOORE

1321 LOCUST STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW TABOO

IN a paper read before the Academy of Inscriptions, Paris, on September 8, 1911, Salomon Reinach propounded a theory of the mother-in-law taboo which may be of interest to anthropologists. The paper subsequently appeared in *L'Anthropologie* (1911, pp. 649-662) and is now reprinted in the fourth volume of the author's *Cultes, Mythes et Religions* (Paris, 1912). Reinach notes that of a total of some 65 cases of avoidances between relatives recorded in Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy*, 43 refer to the relations of son-in-law and mother-in-law. This may thus be regarded as the "typical" avoidance. The author reviews and rejects the various theories propounded to account for the origin of the custom: the theory of Frazer, who regards the custom as a safeguard against incest between the son-in-law and the mother-in-law; the theory of Lubbock, who sees in it a survival of marriage by capture; the theory of Tylor, who explains the taboo as a reaction of the wife's family against the intrusion of her husband; and the theory of Crawley, who sees in marriage a breach of a sexual taboo which, by extension, the son-in-law applies also to his mother-in-law.

Reinach's own theory rests on two postulates: the savage does not distinguish between appearance and reality (here special reference is made to the work of Lévy-Bruhl); the horror of incest is a most powerful emotion, universal in its distribution, while the responsibility for an incestuous act falls mainly on the male. We may assume that the husband's residence with his wife's people is, like maternal descent with which it is correlated, a more ancient practice than paternal descent and the wife's residence with her husband. It is to be expected that on his installation in his wife's household the husband would soon be on

terms of familiarity with her mother and presently would learn to call her "mother". The suggestion of actual blood-relationship carried by that term would not fail to react on the view taken by his mates of his marital union: if his wife's mother is his mother, incest has been committed: he has married his own sister. In order then to discourage all suspicion of incest, it is best to avoid *all* relations with one's mother-in-law, to ignore her. "Thus," concludes Reinach, "avoidance of the mother-in-law seems to me to be nothing else but an emphatic, categorical denial of the possibility of incest between brother and sister: the definitive proof that my wife is not my sister lies in the fact that I do not know, refuse to know, her mother; and that the latter professes a similar attitude toward me."

A. A. GOLDENWEISER

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK CITY

ARROW-CHIPPING BY MEANS OF FIRE AND WATER

FOLLOWING is a quotation from a communication by Ed. Nagle, an old fur-trader of the far north of Canada, who is now in British Columbia, addressed to Mr Frederick W. Godsal of Cowley, Alberta, regarding the flaking of stone arrowpoints among the Athapascans Indians of Great Bear Lake, Mackenzie Territory:

"I am sure you have given up all hopes of hearing from me on flint arrow heads question; but I was simply trying to find out for certain how they manufactured these arrow points from the rough, and here it is. I sent to Edmonton for my note book used while on a trip to Great Bear Lake, and here are my notes: 'Flint is not chipped with stone or with metal, but with water. When an Indian wished to make an arrow head he held a piece of flint in the fire until it was very hot, then allowed a drop of water to drip from the end of a stick upon the spot to be chipped off.' The sudden cooling made the flint chip off immediately; some cunning is of course necessary in the shaping of the arrow head, but the old Indian method is the best that has been found as yet. When I wrote you previously to this it was an arrowhead made from a slate stone, which the Esquimeaux use in place of flint for boys."